

March 21th 2022

Good afternoon Senator Fonfara, Representative Scanlon, Senator Martin, Representative Cheeseman, and the distinguished members of the Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee.

My name is Seth Freeman, I am a Professor at Capital Community College, President of Congress of CT Community Colleges and a proud member of Recovery For All coalition. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of SB 443.

Connecticut's state and local tax system disproportionately impacts low- and middle-income earners. This is a regressive structure, that is disempowering and unjust. A regressive structure that reenforces the gross disparity between rich and poor in our state. It also reenforces the despicable racial wealth divide in our state.

The purpose of a tax incidence report is to provide lawmakers with historical data to enable reasonably accurate forecasting and inform tax policy decisions. SB 443 will ensure that the mistakes of the 2022 report do not happen again and provide more confidence for future DRS reporting.

The General Assembly can make real transformational progress in addressing Connecticut's inequities by using coherent, historical data and forecasting to inform their tax policy decision making. SB 443 will ensure that future tax incidence reports are detailed and uniform, giving policymakers the tools they need to right size Connecticut's unequal tax burdens.

In our community college system where I teach and work, I see first-hand how our students suffer from our states regressive tax structure. I see community colleges that are chronically under-resourced and understaffed. I see community colleges struggling with persistent equity gaps. Sadly, this chronic under-resourcing is now manifesting itself in a destructive merger of our community colleges.

Real harm comes to our students, and all residents of our state from our regressive tax structure. Our state continues to accept the unacceptable. All of us who seek racial and economic justice must support our state in doing better.

Our state has the resources to build an equitable Connecticut. We just need the will.

SB443 moves our state in the right direction, to fixing an unjust tax structure.

Thank you committee members for your time and for all of your hard work